

preferred host might actually be redbay (*Persea borbonia*), a species of Lauraceae with a distribution encompassed by that of *H. apiatus*. One of Mr. Vigneault's specimens came to an ultraviolet light, the others were taken by beating undetermined woody plants, which could have included sassafras or redbay, both common at Virginia Beach. Dr. Buhlmann's specimen was taken in a pitfall trap during the period of 3 August-8 September 1989, establishing a summer-long activity period. That the species occurs as far inland as Raleigh implies a Virginia distribution more extensive than our single locality might suggest. Perhaps collecting efforts focused on the two tree species mentioned above may yield additional information on this interesting beetle.

## LITERATURE CITED

- Blackwelder, R. E. 1947. Checklist of the coleopterous insects of Mexico, Central America, the West Indies, and South America. Part V. United States National Museum Bulletin 185: 765-925.
- Blatchley, W. S., & C. W. Leng. 1916. The Rhynchophora or weevils of North Eastern America. The Nature Publishing Company, Indianapolis, IN. 681 pp.
- Brimley, C. S. 1938. The Insects of North Carolina, Being a List of the Insects of North Carolina and their Close Relatives. North Carolina Department of Agriculture, Raleigh, NC. 560 pp.
- Kirk, V. M. 1969. A list of the beetles of South Carolina. Part 1 - Northern Coastal Plain. South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station Technical Bulletin 1033. 124 pp.
- Kirk, V. M. 1970. A list of the beetles of South Carolina. Part 2 - Mountain, Piedmont, and Southern Coastal Plain. South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station Technical Bulletin 1038. 115 pp.
- Woodruff, R. E. 1963. An avocado weevil (*Heilipus apiatus* Oliv.) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae). Florida Department of Agriculture, Entomology Circular 11: 1.
- Richard L. Hoffman  
Virginia Museum of Natural History  
Martinsville, Virginia 24112
- Banisteria*, Number 22, 2003  
© 2003 by the Virginia Natural History Society
- PELAGE ANOMALY IN A NORTHERN SHORT-TAILED SHREW, *BLARINA BREVICAUDA*, FROM WEST VIRGINIA -- Pure albinism is rare in insectivores; however, albinism, white spotting or belting has been documented for masked shrews (*Sorex cinereus*), dusky shrews (*Sorex obscurus*), least shrews (*Cryptotis parva*), and northern short-tailed shrews (*Blarina brevicauda*) (Hamilton, 1939; Elder, 1960; Brooks & Doyle, 1994; Long & Gehring, 1995; Moncrief & Anderson, 1997; Bumann & Scanlon, 2002; S. McLaren, pers. comm.). Older short-tailed shrews often display white hairs infrequently throughout the pelage or they may be concentrated into dime-sized spots near the flanks (Hamilton, 1939). Twelve short-tailed shrews with pelage anomalies have been documented in Pennsylvania, most with a single or few white spots (S. McLaren, pers. comm.). Most of these animals were captured over 50 years ago, and only two have been taken in the last 25 years. One of these two was a pure albino short-tailed shrew collected at Powdermill Biological Station, ca. 100 km southeast of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In over 43,000 captures in that project, this was the only short-tailed shrew with a white pelage; no partial albinos were captured (J. Merritt, pers. comm.).
- We captured a northern short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) with partially white pelage. The specimen was captured in a pitfall on 30 May 2001 in a wetland located in the Monongahela National Forest in Tucker Co., West Virginia (39.07238° N; 79.473078° W, ca. 1114 m). The dry pitfall trap was a 964-cm<sup>3</sup> plastic drink cup set flush in the ground. The vegetation in this acidic (pH range: 3.3-5.5) shrub-bog was dominated by groundberry (*Rubus* spp.), black chokeberry (*Pyrus melanocarpa*), blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.), *Polytrichum* moss, and *Sphagnum* moss.
- The specimen weighed 11.0 g, and was identified as a non-lactating female. She had a partial white band, ca. 8 x 15 mm, on the right side, about halfway between the forelegs and hindlegs (Fig. 1). It was photographed and released near the capture point. This specimen was one of 30 northern short-tailed shrews captured in five nights of trapping at this site (1875 trap-nights) using pitfalls, Sherman live traps, and Museum Special snap-traps. We captured 198 northern short-tailed shrews at 19 additional wetland sites in West Virginia and western Maryland in 2001; all exhibited normal pelage coloration.

Through inquiry to regional natural history museums, we note that our capture is the only the second recorded pelage anomaly for northern short-tailed shrews in West Virginia. Another specimen with several white spots was captured in 1985 in Pocahontas County, in the Cranberry Back Country of the Monongahela National Forest (S. McLaren, pers. comm.).



Fig. 1. Live northern short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) from West Virginia with a white pelage anomaly (arrow).

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank S. McLaren (Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA), J. Merritt (Powdermill Biological Station, Rector, PA), N. Castleberry (West Virginia University), M.E. Hight (Marshall University), and E. McGhee (Georgia Museum of Natural History) for checking the collections of their respective institutions for *B. brevicauda* with abnormal pelage

conditions. Additionally, we thank S. Dumpert, R. Kotecki, and H. Hadley for assistance in the field.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Brooks, R. T., & K. L. Doyle. 1994. White-belted coloration in a masked shrew, *Sorex cinereus*, from Massachusetts. *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 108: 491-492.
- Bumann, G. B., & P. F. Scanlon. 2002. An unusual coat color pattern in a northern short-tailed shrew, *Blarina brevicauda*. *Virginia Journal of Science* 53: 104.
- Elder, W. H. 1960. An albino *Cryptotis* from Missouri. *Journal of Mammalogy* 41: 506-507.
- Hamilton, W. J., Jr. 1939. Note: Albino *Blarinas*. *Journal of Mammalogy* 20: 252.
- Long, C. A., & J. A. Gehring. 1995. Valais-goat color pattern in a masked shrew (*Sorex cinereus*) and lack of size dependence in pigmentation patterns. *Journal of Mammalogy* 76: 937-939.
- Moncrief, N. D., & J. M. Anderson. 1997. White-belted coloration in a northern short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*). *American Midland Naturalist* 137: 397-400.
- Karen E. Francel and Steven B. Castleberry  
Daniel B. Warnell School of Forest Resources  
University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia 30602-2152
- W. Mark Ford  
USDA Forest Service Timber and Watershed  
Laboratory  
Parsons, West Virginia 26287